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ABSTRACT

This guide discusses the essentials of live virtual reference, preparing for virtual reference, and implementing and incorporating virtual reference. Chapter 1, "Understanding Live Virtual Reference," lays out what virtual reference is and how it compares to other forms of reference. Chapter 2, "Offering Live Virtual Reference," presents ten reasons to offer virtual reference and ten obstacles to overcome. Chapter 3, "Exploring the Five Models of Live Virtual Reference," introduces the basic, homegrown, advanced, collaborative, and corporate models. Chapter 4, "Planning for Live Reference—A Nine-Step Process," presents an overview of the planning process and includes sections on articulating a vision, forming a committee, investigating funding, and drafting policy. Chapter 5, "Gathering Information on Live Virtual Reference," covers exploring the external and internal environments. Chapter 6, "Deciding on a Staffing Model for Live Virtual Reference," describes staffing for each of the five models of virtual reference. Chapter 7, "Selecting Software for Live Virtual Reference," present software options for the five models. Chapter 8, "Training the Staff for Live Virtual Reference," discusses the core reference skills that must be adapted to the virtual environment, as well as the new real-time techniques that apply specifically to chatting on the Internet. Chapter 9, "Marketing for Live Virtual Reference," explains the importance of marketing a virtual reference service. Each chapter contains references. (Contains a glossary and index.) (MES)

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